

Do middle-school students understand how well they actually learn?

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Given national mandates to ‘leave no child behind,’ grade-school students are expected to learn an enormous amount of course material in a limited amount of time.

“Students have too much to learn, so it’s important they learn efficiently,” says Dr. John Dunlosky, Kent State professor of psychology and associate editor of *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition*. Today, students are expected to understand and remember difficult concepts relevant to state achievement tests.

However, a major challenge is the student’s ability to judge his own learning. “Students are extremely over confident about what they’re learning,” says Dunlosky.

Dunlosky and his colleague, Dr. Katherine Rawson, Kent State assistant professor of psychology, study metacomprehension, or the ability to judge your own comprehension and learning of text materials. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, their research primarily focuses on fifth, seventh and eighth graders as well as college-aged students, and how improving metacomprehension can, in turn, improve students’ self-regulated learning.

One way to improve this issue is to self-test, says Rawson. After reading or studying information, wait for a short time; then try to recall or summarize the information from memory. Next, check the information recalled against the original source material. Adds Rawson: “Our

research consistently shows that without checking, people often believe they've remembered something correctly when in fact they haven't."

Currently, Dunlosky and Rawson are developing a "study buddy" that combines accurate monitoring with effective schedules of learning. When the guide is completed, they hope to provide it to schools across the state of Ohio.

Source: Kent State University

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